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Coyote, He/She Was Going There: Sex and Gender in Native American Trickster Stories[1]

Franchot Ballinger

Most readers of Native American oral traditions have at least a nodding acquaintance with a trickster—Raven, Coyote, Blue Jay, Iktomi the spider or Nanabush—and most are aware of the ribaldry often informing trickster stories. Few, however, have considered the implications of Tricksters' sexuality. Fewer still have considered the fact that tricksters are commonly, but not exclusively, male. Of the hundreds of trickster tales I have read, in no more than a few dozen are the trickster protagonists female (and some of these stories can be found in other Native American oral traditions in versions with male protagonists). Moreover, even in those tribes whose trickster stories have female protagonists, such stories are apparently in the minority. These few facts suggest that exploring trickster stories for an understanding of sexuality and gender expectations may provide some unique, if not revolutionary, insights into Native American trickster stories while underscoring the richness of the trickster tradition as a socially formative kind of entertainment (as opposed to the Euroamerican scholarly cliché of Trickster as a sort of Romantic overreacher).

With Siobahn Senier, who also considered questions of gendering, I "ask why [a trickster story] is gendered and relayed as it is . . . and [I]

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speculate as to what kind of impulses [a] narration might be reinforcing or subverting" (223). Even if Native American storytellers and audiences have not commented on or otherwise explicitly acknowledged the role of gender in trickster stories, there are clues that gender roles are sometimes part of their underlying didacticism and satire. The thesis of this paper is, then, that in a number of Native American trickster stories, gender matters. The use of either male or female tricksters as well as a storyteller's gendering narrative details may point to a storyteller's critical cultural judgments or personal observations on a tribe's gender assumptions—for example, attitudes toward male headmen or the nature of men's and women's behavior or ideals of male or female social roles—or to corrective commentary directed at an individual. Certainly, this is so in male trickster stories, and it is likely true in at least some stories with female tricksters. Further, there are a few trickster stories that are interesting to consider in the context of the Two Spirit people (once known as *berdaches).*

Readers might question the wisdom and value of focusing on the topic of tricksters' gender, considering that it seems of little or no significance in the discussion of so many trickster stories. However, the effort in recent studies of Native American oral traditions has often been to "read" stories as works of individual creativity, not as the products of a homogeneous, traditional voice. The fact that trickster gender was a matter of indifference to many trickster storytellers may make all the more significant those instances in which gender does seem to be an issue. Some storytellers certainly would have been more responsive than others to opportunities for social commentary and teaching afforded by trickster stories, just as some were more sensitive to and skillful at practicing the "aesthetics" of the community's storytelling tradition. In this context, I want to proceed carefully in my "interpretations." Readers should not assume that I see a particular story as an official reflection of a culture's values.[2] I am well aware of Craig Thompson's caution: "Every group—every individual—is a producer of cultural meaning; nobody is merely an object of cultural perceptions" (36). It is not accurate to claim that a myth projects a society's "real" attitude about anything. Rather it is probably true that "in the actual context of performance, there were a variety of audiences which a single 'univocal' reading doesn't account for." Stories are part of a "continual social discourse"; that is, meaning lies in "reactions to the tales and in the effect that the tale had on intertribal relations" (23). Similarly, a story represents a single storyteller's interpretation of how a story's narrative details open a window on his or

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her culture's values. Clearly, the cultural value theme dramatized in one telling of a trickster story may not be at all present in another telling. Nevertheless, some cultural generalizations may be possible as an entry point for this topic.

Melville Jacobs first stimulated my curiosity about gender issues in the Trickster tradition. One of a few writers to consider why female tricksters are relatively rare, Jacobs argues that male tricksters are exclusive in the Chinook oral tradition because Coyote's main personality traits—particularly inordinate, vulgar sexuality and traveling for the sake of adventure—were considered male traits only (*Content* 141). He further conjectures that a male storyteller would have recounted "more and better" Coyote stories than his storyteller/consultant, Mrs. Howard, because the "Coyote personality would surely have been identified with more often by men than women" (*Content* 121). In some other cultures as well, narrating trickster stories was apparently associated with men only. One example is that Anishinabe Wenebojo stories related to the *Mide wiwin* were told mainly by men (Barnouw 117). Also, associations between the trickster and male characteristics were made in other tribes; the Cayuga trickster, to cite another specific instance, "represents unrestrained male sexuality" (Day 77).

To call such assumptions and understandings *stereotyping* would be ethnocentric. However, in matters of social expectations for men and women, Turtle Island's indigenous peoples assumed specific and different social and family roles for men and women. While such assumptions don't, in general, seem to have been justification for oppressing or otherwise belittling women (men's and women's roles and responsibilities commonly being accorded equal significance), there do seem to have been clear cut assumptions and expectations about gender character and responsibility. Consequently, given the licentiousness associated with men, it is no accident that most tricksters are male.

In any event, the hyperbole that abounds in dramatizations of male trickster sexuality carries that sexuality to levels traditionally unacceptable to many Euroamericans, but traditionally, many Native American societies have been less priggish than the dominant Euroamerican culture. In early times among the Klamath, obscene anal and erotic details were essential features of some myths (both trickster and non-trickster) and were recounted even in the presence of children (Stern, "Some Sources" 137).[3] Native American playwright Hanay Geiogamah acknowledges that "among the boys" trickster stories were commonly pornographic (Lincoln 75-6). Nevertheless, while these stories may have provided juicy

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entertainment, the social dangers and disorder attending or threatened by men's unbridled sexuality is at the heart of a number of trickster tales.[4]

Tricksters' prodigious sexual appetites and energy are hilariously and powerfully dramatized by the gamut of their lusts and the size of their penises. The Yurok trickster, Wohpekumeu, to cite one instance, is so sexually robust and so promiscuous that he impregnates women with a mere glance. Because of his sexual threat, the people once literally leave him in the world alone, making him temporarily one of the few truly outcast Tricksters (Kroeber, *Yurok* 311). No doubt the best known depiction of a trickster's sexuality is the Winnebago Wadjunkaga's extraordinarily long penis (long enough that it can snake across a stream and insert itself into a woman's vagina) which he carries in a box on his back, giving the illusion of control (Wiget, *Native* 16-17)—a control essential to good social order but a control clearly beyond a trickster's capabilities, as the evidence of the stories show.[5] Also well equipped, the Athapascan Coyote carries his penis flung over his shoulder (Erdoes 71). Even though such a phallus is not explicitly characteristic of all male tricksters, the image has become synecdochic for all tricksters' licentiousness. Males in many cultures keep telling themselves that size is everything, the bigger the better. However, in one Crow trickster story, it's the little things that count—at least temporarily, and we get a wonderfully comic image of the lengths to which Old-Man Coyote will go to have sex with a pretty girl. During a dance, a young woman tells the men to expose their penises because she wants to marry the man with the smallest. Old Man Coyote exchanges penises with mouse. The girl chooses him, of course, but his triumph lasts only until the on-lookers see mouse trying to walk through the encampment dragging Old Man Coyote's huge penis (Lowie, *Myths* 43).

No woman is safe for long from a trickster's penis; not virgins or other men's wives, not his daughters, not his mother-in-law, not even his grandmother. Nor, consequently, is any social relationship or institution safe. Community well being and harmony, friendship, marriage, family: all fall before tricksters' incorrigible penis. Sometimes a trickster's sexual rapaciousness drives him to violate very specific tribal moral customs. Crow married women were vulnerable to being kidnapped by former lovers in the rivalry existing between the Lumpwood and Fox societies. It was shameful for a man to take back a wife who had been abducted. However, Old Man Coyote brags that he has done so three times. In fact, his mere glance reminds a woman of the sexual favors he has shown her, so that regardless of any disgrace, she will return to him (Lowie, *Crow*

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56). Human females are not his only victims; a buffalo cow mired in a wallow is on occasion as acceptable to a trickster as a human woman.[6] In a sense, he even sexually abuses men when in some stories he marries a chief's son. Thanks to his prodigious penis, Trickster even "abuses" himself when he commits self-fellatio (Bright 70-72; Ramsey, *Reading* 44-45). The issue in many of these stories is not sexual victimization as such but rather the cruelty, self-deception, and absurdity of a man whose unrestrained sexuality poses a threat to the community. Such stories dramatize the power of human sexuality to whirl us beyond the boundaries of human social constraints.[7]

These facts notwithstanding, there are occasions when a trickster's sexual assertiveness *is* stimulated by hostility and aggression toward a woman, and women become his victims because of their gender. In a Nez Perce story, an old woman ridicules his eyes because they appear wide-open in the dark. "Coyote then thinks to himself, 'Your saying such a thing, woman, makes me want to make you my wife and get even with you' [that is, have sex with her]" (Walker 206). Sometimes, he acts out his anger or hostility toward a woman for other reasons and perhaps in non-sexual ways. Coyote becomes so angry when Eagle's daughter refuses to marry him that he turns women into rock (Clark 113). More often, sex seems a weapon, as when in some Nez Perce stories Coyote rapes and impregnates "young women who are enemies" (Walker 207-8). There is at least one common story type in which female sexuality is the cause of trickster's hostility: so-called vaginal dentata stories. In these stories, female sexuality—not male, as is usually the case in trickster stories—poses a threat, at least to the availability of women to men. In an Upper Cowlitz story of Soft Basket Woman's vaginal teeth, Coyote destroys the teeth with artificial penises and then announces that in the future sexual union between men and women will be more congenial to and a good deal less dangerous to men (Jacobs, "Sahaptin" 188-90).[8]

Male tricksters' dealings with women are often directed by their response to or manipulations of gender expectations for women. Sometimes they shape women's lives. In many instances, a trickster's shenanigans introduce a few benefits but more often, limitations, even controls, on women's lives. Hence, Coyote creates pregnancy in a Wishram story (Ramsey, *Coyote* 52). In a Havasupai story, Coyote gives origin to women's menstrual cycles by flipping fresh fawn blood between his sister's legs, apparently in order to prevent her sharing in his freshly killed deer meat (Niethammer 37-38). Similarly, Manabush originates menstruation by throwing a clot of bear's blood between the legs of Nokomis,

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his grandmother (Hoffman 173-5). Finally, Crow legend tells us that it was Old Man Coyote who made women's very existence possible, for he created women to keep men company and to assure that the people will increase in number (Lowie, *Crow* 124).[9]

In another common trickster episode, one not overtly sexual but with obvious sexual and gender ramifications, women (or at least, a certain kind of woman) are clearly a trickster's victims and the object of the story's satire. The so-called "well-behaved girl" (a euphemism for chaste but maybe also prudish?) stories tell of a young woman who arrogantly rejects all suitors and all thought of marrying. She pays a high price for her pride: Trickster hoodwinks her into marrying him or at least having sex with him, a severe humiliation given women's usual disdain for Trickster. The Yurok trickster *Wohpekuman* impregnates two young women who refuse to marry (Kroeber, *Yurok* 304). Similarly, the Arapaho *Nih'An Ca*" sleeps with two pretty sisters who won't marry (Dorsey and Kroeber 73-4). In a Tewa version, Blue Corn girl and Yellow Corn girl refuse one by one to marry the Cloud Boys of the four directions who offer them marvelous gifts as marriage tokens. Coyote says that these women are "lazy about [marriage]." When he dances and sings for them, they want to marry him. The next morning before the girls awaken, others in the village see that the girls have married Coyote and chase him away (Parsons, *Tewa* 242-6).

From a contemporary Euroamerican point of view (particularly if the point of view is informed by feminism), this latter story type may seem an assertion of male sexual-social authority over women. However, imposing such views here would be a mistake. It is likely that this trickster's audience—male and female alike—would have approved of his victim's chagrin in these cases, their roles as a woman. Clara Sue Kidwell has pointed out:

> The status of Indian women within their communities is based upon different cultural values than those of typically middle class white women. The tribally oriented societies of Indian cultures and the extended family situation in which several generations may live very closely together give a different definition to the roles of women than do the nuclear family orientation and the technological aspect of the dominant society. . . . Marriage was a necessity for the survival of the community . . . for the procreation and carrying on of the group identity and culture. (114)

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While a woman might have chosen not to marry and would have been allowed to live out her choice, she was nevertheless still subject to the disapproval of the community, for such a woman was "considered guilty of the sin of pride, a sin that in the close-knit structure and interdependence of the tribal group is of major import. . . . [R]ejection of her [social] role was in a sense a rejection of the whole society" (116; see also Lindsay 329-30). Looked at from this point of view, we see a trickster in an uncommon and ironic light: as enforcer of social stability teaching a woman a lesson. When a woman is the satirical butt of a male trickster story, it is usually because she (for once not the trickster) has—her culture agrees—rebelled against the community's values and needs.

But it is not only women who suffer Trickster's chastening for not fulfilling society's gender expectations with respect to marriage. Male versions of the "well-behaved girl" stories involve what might be called Trickster's transgendering, yet another way that tricksters cross the boundaries of the expected. In these stories, Trickster poses as a woman and marries a man. An Anishinabe story of this sort satirizes a chief's son's arrogant refusal to marry. When the beautiful woman he has married is unveiled as *Wenebojo* the young man is appropriately humiliated (Barnouw 106). In a Swampy Cree version of this tale, the trickster *Wichikapache* hears of a conceited young man who wants a wife but who can't find a "good one" and therefore finds fault with every women he sees. (Norman 165). The trickster transforms himself into a beautiful woman, whom the young man "quickly likes" (Norman 165). *Wichikapache* proves to be a good wife, even giving birth to children. However, the children are wolf cubs, a fact that makes the young man the laughing stock of the community. It is immediately obvious to all that the beautiful woman must, in fact, be the trickster.

In any event, this last type of trickster marrying story notwithstanding, it is safe to say that, generally speaking, the laughter stimulated by most sexually-oriented male trickster stories is not because of what the trickster does to women but rather because of what he reveals about himself (and males?) as he victimizes others.

Tricksters' relationships with women are not always based on sexuality alone; sometimes their attitudes and behavior toward women grow from their own failures to fulfill their gender roles. Deward E. Walker points out that "Coyote is not adept at skills a woman finds attractive in a potential mate such as fathering, hunting, or fighting" (206); hence women reject him repeatedly. His aggression toward women, then, is at least in part a consequence of his own gender failings. In episodes involving

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adult males also, we see tricksters failing to fill gender expectations. Walker points out that hunting is the usual ground of the Nez Perce Coyote's interactions with males (221). The same is true for other tricksters. Commonly in these circumstances, their incompetence, lack of self-discipline, and unseemly competitiveness lead inevitably to failure as hunters. Episodes in which a trickster demonstrates his incompetence as father and provider abound. Those that come to mind most readily in this context are the bungling host stories in which a trickster is hosted by an animal who feeds his guest through some magical manipulation, sometimes involving killing his children but bringing them back to life after the feast. On occasion, the killing is only a ruse to trick the trickster. In any event, when the trickster tries to play host by killing his children for food, of course, the results are less fortunate. Walker also recounts a Nez Perce story in which Coyote cheats Porcupine in a rivalry for a buffalo carcass. He fetches his wife and children to help him carry home all of the meat rather than just taking home what he can carry. However, Porcupine kills them all. This fatal but predictable ending comes about because Coyote foolishly brought his family "to a place where enemies are present, thus placing them in danger" (85-88, 211).

On the basis of such evidence, it seems clear that the satire of many trickster stories focuses on gender values.

But what about those relatively few stories in which a female trickster is protagonist? The first obvious question is, why are there so few? Given the vagaries of recording and translating stories from oral traditions, it may be that female tricksters were more common than current publications indicate. Perhaps many recorders—largely dominant-culture males—simply showed no interest in female tricksters, or perhaps, as Wiget has suggested, women storytellers, more likely to tell female trickster stories, weren't sought out by male investigators in the mistaken belief that the men of the community were the "repository of traditional knowledge" ("His Life" 89). Perhaps they suppressed such stories for propriety's sake. Or maybe the storytellers themselves, noting Euroamerican moral predilections and cultural assumptions about women, suppressed the stories. We could conjecture further, but the fact remains that there are many fewer female than male tricksters, in the academic record at least, and, possibly, in First Nations' oral traditions as well.

Even when female tricksters have appeared in Native American stories, there has been little or no printed commentary on the protagonist's gender by either storyteller or ethnographer. Of course, the inevitable question is, given the socially formative or didactic nature of so many

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trickster tales, might it not make a difference whether a trickster is male or female? Are female tricksters assigned certain kinds of motif or episode? Another logical question is whether American Indians had/have different attitudes about male and female tricksters. As far as the published record is concerned, it appears to some that, again, from the point of view of storyteller and ethnographer, the presence of a trickster personality is more important than gender. Writing about a Hopi story with a female protagonist, Andrew Wiget comments: "the female sex of the trickster seems only a contrivance to initiate the action, an element of setting, and is not integral to the central action" ("His Life" 89).[10] Further support for this general point of view may come in an Acoma trickster tale in which the protagonist's gender seems of so little consequence to either the storyteller or the recorder that pronoun gender references change a couple of times in the course of the story (Parsons, *Pueblo Folktales* 227-228).

Perhaps a trickster's gender is a matter of narrative and thematic indifference to many storytellers. Still, I would suggest that this is not always so, but rather that, at least on occasion (and maybe more frequently than we know), gender plays a role in plot and narrative details and reflects something about either a culture's or a storyteller's gender attitudes. Or perhaps the plot and narrative details of an episode type (for example, the borrowed feathers episode below) encourage a storyteller to use a gender-appropriate protagonist. On the few occasions that tricksters have status or authority in a community, their positions are generally of a sort associated with males in patrilineal societies. If it's reasonable to assume that such satirical narrative details of some trickster stories are male-directed, it seems equally reasonable to assume that some storytellers used female tricksters because they saw certain episodes as gender appropriate.[11] Although there may be no particular kinds of episode assigned exclusively to female tricksters, when a story has a female protagonist, it sometimes seems to frame a gender-related theme or to be gender appropriate. In the relative absence of analysis and commentary by Native Americans, we can only conjecture about these matters. Readers must understand, then, that much of the following is hypotheses, not unflinching assertion; it is inference based on available cultural and narrative evidence. The many variables and the insufficiency of evidence here would make anything more than hypothesizing foolish. Still, it is interesting to speculate.

Partial evidence for intentional gendering in a trickster story may be the fact that in one tribe a particular trickster episode may have a male

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protagonist, while in another it may have a female protagonist. For example, the common Bungling Host story among Plains and Central Woodlands tribes has a male trickster imitating his erstwhile host by killing his own children for food, while versions among the Tewa and the Hopi use female tricksters (Parsons, *Tewa* 291; Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 77). The presence of male and female tricksters for the same or similar episodes in respectively patrilineal and matrilineal societies is not likely casual happenstance.[12] However these changes in gender came to be, it seems reasonable to assume that for some storytellers, at least, cultural values and assumptions led to considering certain stories as particularly appropriate for female coyotes.

To proceed, then, in the few female trickster stories available to us, she is commonly the object of the satire. The questions arise: Is she satirized because she is a woman or is she satirized because she is a trickster who incidentally is female? What, if any, relationship exists between the trickster's gender and the narrative elements in the stories? I believe that in most female trickster stories the protagonist's trickster personality causes her to fall short of her community's gender role expectations. She is, therefore, fair game for satire, as is the male trickster personality when he fails his society's expectations, some of them gender-related, for example, when he fails both as a warrior and a chief in the Winnebago cycle or when he perverts his father's role by marrying his daughter. Furthermore, it seems that cultural context sometimes implies particular (if not essential) appropriateness for the narrative events and/or details of some female trickster tales.

As we begin considering female tricksters, we should note that there are two specific trickster attributes not represented among published female trickster tales. This isn't to say that stories of either type don't or didn't exist; again, collections simply do not seem to contain them. First, there seem to be no female trickster/transformers of the mythical proportions of many male tricksters. The closest we get to female tricksters/transformers is a Crow story in which Old Man Coyote's wife proves as creative as her husband through "sacred reversals" (to use Gerald Vizenor's term) when she causes various transformations of the world by contradicting the transformer Red-Woman's edicts. Like her husband and other transformer tricksters (particularly those who act as marplots in the creation of the world), she contributes to making the newly shaped world into the human world by establishing the possibility of early human death, by giving origin to *bates* (the so-called *berdache*), as well as to roots for medicine, etc. (Lowie, *Myths* 28-30).[13] The relative

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absence of female trickster-transformers is not likely due to denigration of feminine creativity, for, of course, many American Indian tribal mythologies contain female personages who transform the physical, social, and ceremonial worlds. This includes matrilineal societies with female trickster stories.

A second trickster attribute absent among published female trickster stories is the trickster's prodigious sexual appetite. A possible exception is a Hopi episode in which a widowed female Coyote grinds her dead husband's penis into powder which she applies to her vulva whenever she desires the same rollicking, rapturous sex the living husband provided her (Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 55). However, this mother Coyote lacks other identifying trickster traits, and her motivation seems not so much rash bawdiness—what we would expect from a male trickster—as simply a widow's longing for the continuing benefit of her husband's sexual prowess.[14] Whatever the explanation for the paucity of sexual content, it is generally speaking not prudishness about women and sex, for there are other kinds of stories, including male trickster stories, in which women prove equally lusty as men.

The most obvious fact we should note about stories with female tricksters is that they are all from matrilineal and/or matrilocal tribes, most Southwestern peoples, but a few from Caddoan peoples. In most, and maybe all, of these tribes, women have generally had significant *de facto* or "official" authority or power. For example, among the western Tewa and the Hopi, women have traditionally controlled the economic system and the home that is at the core of that system. Women own the houses, the fields, and the fruits of cultivation through their clans, with the clan mothers having final say in matters of distribution. Furthermore, strong ties among mothers-daughters-sisters create solidarity of opinion, which in turn carries much authority. Among the Tewa, it is the women who have traditionally cared for family ritual possessions, no mean office, to be sure (Schlegel 169-71; Dozier 137). Among the Navajo, in addition to an authority attending matrilineality and matrilocality, women have traditionally benefited from the liberation and authority of having independent incomes and of owning property, often more than men (Kessler 112). It should come as no surprise, then, that at least some trickster stories are about women in societies where women are notable social and economic forces.

Because some male trickster stories satirize men who are in positions of authority or power, for example headmen or shamans, we might be tempted to approach female trickster stories in matrilineal societies as

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satires of women's authority. But when Mother Coyote is satirized, the reasons seem to be other than her authority or power. In fact, she is so incompatible with her society's expectations of her that she seems to have neither. And this may be the point of the stories: perhaps she is the object of satire because she is incapable of being the strong woman her society expects her to be. These possibilities are underscored by a second fact: in these stories, Trickster is always a coyote. To be sure, among the tribes whose female trickster tales I've examined, male as well as female tricksters are coyotes. As wandering hunters and as social transgressors, all coyote tricksters, male and female, live wayward lives of risk and transience. Nevertheless, the female coyote trickster's incongruity with her community is even more pronounced, for to have a hunting mother in a culture where mothers traditionally control the agricultural means of production (as they did in most of these tribes) seems in itself a comment on her fecklessness.[15]

Interestingly, it is not only general plot details but also specific narrative details that might reflect gender awareness. In some female trickster stories, particularly Hopi stories, we find narrative details befitting women's roles. For example, in New Mexican and Arizona Tewa versions of the borrowed feathers story, both using male tricksters, the birds at the beginning of the story are either picking up wheat that lies about or dancing in gratitude for a grass-like wheat available to them (Parsons, *Tewa* 161, 283). In the eastern Pueblos, women were the gatherers of seeds and nuts. Perhaps we see another example in the eastern version of Coyote's once more placing himself out of his element, in this case gender fitting sustenance activities. In a Hopi version of the story, a female Coyote chances upon the Bird Girls as they grind corn, typically women's work at which, the storyteller informs us, they are always busy. While they grind, they sing songs whose images suggest the integral relationship between grinding, their identity and even their physical traits.

> Bird Girl, Bird Girl
> Brush the cornmeal off the grinding stone.
> Bird Girl, Bird Girl
> Brush the cornmeal off the grinding stone.
> Callous, callous are the nails,
> Callous, callous are the horns
> [Presumably, calluses from using the grinding stone]
> Meehe'e'e'e hew, hew, hew. (Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 93)

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When the song ends, they briefly fly into the air, then return to their grinding, repeating the work-ritual sequence again and again. Into this scene, vagrant Coyote intrudes. She sees, perhaps, not the stability of women's work-ritual but rather a game and, one assumes, an easy meal of Bird Girls. At her request, the Bird Girls allow her to join in the grinding, which she does awkwardly. This is not, after all, her usual work. Next, she wants to learn the song and then the dance-flight, both of which are as alien to her earth-bound presence as the customary women's work of grinding corn. The Bird Girls give Coyote some of their feathers so that she, too, can fly. The consequences of her whim are predictably disastrous when the Bird Girls pluck their feathers from Coyote while she is in the air.[16] The fundamental point here is that the Hopi storyteller's use of a gender related activity like corn grinding gives to the story a more pointed and focused satirical thrust than the Tewa male version. Once again, Mother Coyote demonstrates how miserably she fails to meet the demands of her role, in addition to proving that her blundering imitations take her into unfamiliar territory where she doesn't belong. While such gender-specific details are by no means a consistent difference between male and female trickster stories, even their occasional occurrence suggests that some storytellers were aware of the difference gender makes in the import of a story.

Another fact deserving note is that in almost all stories with female tricksters, some reference is made to her children. In all tribes' male trickster stories, references to Trickster's family are relatively infrequent. When his family are referred to or even made characters in a story, their roles are, with a few exceptions, quite perfunctory, with no essential plot or thematic function.[17] To be sure, in some female trickster stories, references to or uses of trickster's family may be equally perfunctory. Still, there are other instances in which the family as a whole, or Coyote's children or husband in particular, seems to fill significant plot or thematic role. Sometimes a story merely opens with a reference to the fact that she has a family; sometimes the beginning shows or implies that Coyote is trying to meet her maternal duties, for example, by hunting or fetching water for her children.[18] She starts, then, with the best of intentions (something we can seldom say about the male tricksters). But in each instance, her good intentions dissolve under more immediate enticements. Greed, envy, curiosity, her inability to postpone gratification, her ambition to possess what is not rightfully hers, or some vanity or another leads her to instability and to grief. In one story, her desire to have children as pretty as Deer's makes her gullible enough to burn or

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suffocate her own children when she is tricked into putting them in a fire. In an even more common story, her wish to possess another's song, which she wants to sing to her children but which she repeatedly forgets, causes her children to die waiting for her to bring food or water. Her efforts to cheat Porcupine backfire as Porcupine exploits Coyote's gullibility leading to her and her children's deaths. On those occasions when she decides that she wants something not rightfully hers (for example, pretty spots for her children, a certain song, an improved scheme for hunting), her children's presence in the story underscores their trickster mother's foolishness, lack of self-control, or unnatural desires. Considering the frequency with which the children appear in or are referred to in female trickster stories, we are, I suspect, often intended to see a female Coyote's failings as specifically a mother's failings.

A Coyote trickster's character may be particularly threatening to the values attached to women/mothers in Native American stories. In most American Indian traditions, a woman was expected to play a stabilizing role in a community through her steadfastness and creative powers. While men's traditions were, according to Paula Gunn Allen, largely about risk and change, women's and mothers' traditions and rituals were devoted to food, household, medicine; that is, with the maintenance and continuity of life (82). Another source of stability and continuity, particularly for the extended family but also for the community as a whole, can be seen in the expectation that women would defer willingly (but not irrevocably) any immediate personal goals they might have (Bataille and Sands 19-20; Kessler 111). Even without reading the stories, we can guess that Mother Coyote will fail to meet such ideals and expectations. If nothing else, her wandering undercuts the domestic stability she ought to provide.

A Hopi story illustrates Mother Coyote's failings dramatically and also reveals that not all trickster stories are comically amusing, for this story—one of the most stunning trickster stories I have read—ends tragically, if ironically. While it may evoke laughter, as do most trickster stories, the laughter is an uneasy, even grim laughter. In this story, Mother Coyote learns, or thinks she learns, sorcery.

From the story's beginning, we can see that this mother is in a difficult position. Her husband is dead and she, being Coyote, after all, is alone without the support of an extended family; she must do all the hunting to feed her children. Once while hunting, she comes upon a kiva where witches (*Two-Hearts* as the Hopi call them) are engaging in their ceremonies, the most important being jumping through a hoop to trans-

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form themselves into animals, a common ritual for witches, as is their killing others—even relatives—for their hearts so that the witches might survive. Curious, Coyote spies on the witches, who discover her and drag her into their kiva much against her wishes. Told that she must now become a Two Heart, Coyote decides that she wants the power to turn herself into a cottontail, for in this form she can chase down rabbits, changing back to a coyote for the kill at the last instant. The hoop rolls; Coyote jumps through and becomes a cottontail, but unknown to her the head witch spits, which means that Coyote won't be able to transform herself back. When the ceremonies end, Mother Coyote heads for home, delighted at her new power which is sure to increase her ability to care for her little ones. As she approaches home, she says, "I'd like to turn back to a coyote," but, because it is dark, she can't see that she does not transform. In addition, we might assume that, because Coyote possesses so little self-awareness, she is unable to sense any difference in herself. Eager to rejoin her children, she rushes into the lair. You can imagine the reception this cottontail gets from the starving coyote pups (Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 161-77).

A characteristic failing of Coyote's—nosiness, being where she has no business—places her in a circumstance that must inevitably lead to evil, destructive ends. Of course, anyone's joining witches would be horrendous, but a mother's doing so seems especially appalling. Moreover, rather than a ceremonial tradition that maintains life, as women's traditions do, she joins a ritual whose participants survive only through other's deaths, a ritual which is a menace to the community and to the family, the very people a mother's steadfastness and selflessness should sustain. Part of the grim irony of this story is that Coyote joins the Two Hearts who survive by killing even family, but her children kill her as they struggle to survive. While her desire to find a better way to provide for her pups is understandable, the fact remains that her desire for an unnatural advantage leads her to violent change and death, not to life's perpetuation.

In brief, with the ghastly laughter this story elicits from its audience, Mother Coyote unwittingly teaches us exactly what Old Man Coyote teaches us: more often than not, we will pay a price for yielding to the moment's whim and trying to be someone we are not. But it does so in narrative terms that seem particularly appropriate for the gender and cultural context of its protagonist.

There is little doubt that gender expectations play a significant role in trickster stories with male protagonists and at least some of the time in

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female protagonist trickster stories. Such an observation about males and females is a relatively straightforward matter. One particular trickster story, however, complicates the issue of gender and tricksters and elicits more questions than answers. An Omaha trickster story published in Erdoes and Ortiz's *American Indian Trickster Tales* raises other sorts of gender questions about tricksters, this time about the persons called in the past *berdaches,* now called by many writers, Two-Spirit people.[19]

Unlike Euroamerican cultures whose gender distinctions are binary and focus on heterosexuality only, many Native Americans generally defined genders in terms of occupational propensity and behavior rather than sexual choices or biology (Callender and Kochems 455; Maltz and Archambault 23). Some contemporary students of Native Americans' gendering assert that Native American traditions often recognized not only male and female but also Two-Spirit womanly males and Two-Spirit manly women as genders (Sharp 68, Lang 103). This rejection of a dualistic either/or gendering is consistent with the Native American ability to accept what in our culture would be regarded as ambiguous or as an unacceptable boundary transgression, such as the tricksters themselves engage in.[20] A young man might become a Two-Spirit because he demonstrated interest in women's work and by keeping company with women (Callender and Kochems (451). So choosing life as a Two-Spirit was not first and foremost a matter of sexual preference.[21] As with other genders, some kinds of sexual behavior for a Two-Spirit were considered more appropriate than others. Thus, a male-bodied Two-Spirit's having sex with a masculine man was not considered homosexuality, for the Two-Spirit was of a different gender (Lang 104-105). On the other hand, sex between two male-bodied Two-Spirits would have been considered homosexuality, for they were of the same gender (Jacobs *et al* 12). Many nations accepted what amounted to marriages between a Two-Spirit and a man, the Lakota and Winnebago among them (Williams 101).

The presence of Two-Spirit people in some indigenous cultures is also consistent with the tendency of Native American societies to find a contributory role for many kinds of people with diverse characteristics, knowledge and skills. Often, these Two-Spirit people were respected for their artistic natures, their hard work and generosity (Williams 27). In addition, they were frequently honored for their spirituality. In some tribes—for example, the Shoshoni, Miami, Hidatsa and Lakota—Two-Spirit people were assumed to have accepted their gender in response to a vision (Gill and Sullivan, "White Faces" 337; Callender and Kochems 448-9).[22] Two-Spirits figure prominently in the religious traditions of

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some tribes. Among the Navaho, Hidatsa, and Assiniboin, Two-Spirits were considered holy. A *nádleehé* plays a significant role in the Navajo creation story. It was the supernatural gift of birds and animals that lead to the first Arapaho *haxuxana*". Kroeber identifies the Trickster *Nih'a-n'çan* as the first *haxuxana*", for he "pretended to be a woman, married the Mountain-Lion, and deceived him by giving birth to a false child" (Kroeber, *Arapaho* 19). The Lakota *winkte* was traditionally regarded as fulfilling a spiritual destiny and as a possessor of special powers, especially magical and ritualistic powers (Lang 103-4; Williams 32). Northern Plains nations believed that a Two-Spirit might receive special powers for performing women's activities, for example, quilling or tanning. Or their powers might have to do with healing or heterosexual matchmaking (Thayer 290). Often, Two-Spirits performed specific ritual functions such as handling corpses (Yurok), cutting ritual lodge poles (Crow), or performing prominently in scalp dances (Cheyenne) (Gill and Sullivan, "Gender Crossing" 99).

Even before Euroamerican perspectives influenced many indigenous people's views of gender crossing, choosing life as a Two-Spirit was not without its ambivalence. While claiming that among the Cheyenne the Two-spirit enjoyed high status, James Thayer also points out that such a person among most northern Plains peoples was "both feared and prized because, and even in spite of, the supernatural vocation and power" of the person's life, to say nothing of the fact that the Two-Spirit lived in a manner some in Plains society would consider "abnormal," even if accepted (290, 293, 292).[23] Among the Dakota, *winktes* lived on the fringes of camp, the same location where orphans and widows lived, thus manifesting a marginal presence in the community (Thayer 290).[24] Moreover, the Two-Spirit people themselves may sometimes have adopted this gender role with some ambivalence. As occurred in other instances of living a vision-led life, a Two-Spirit also was faced with a challenge through obligations imposed by the vision, in this instance, taking on a new gender role and perhaps new ceremonial responsibilities. Thayer claims that some were so reluctant to take up this challenge that there were occasional suicides. Omaha men sometimes attempted "to conceal [their vision], or even kill themselves to escape their destiny" (Callender and Kochems 451, 453). Following Dorsey, Thayer claims that *miati*—the Hidatsa word for a *berdache* (Thayer's usage)—is derived from *mia* (woman) and the suffix *ti* (to feel an involuntary inclination) (289). Finally, an Omaha became a *winkte* as a result of a vision in which the Moon offered him a choice between a bow and a burden strap. If the

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person chose the bow (indicating thereby choice of a traditional male role), sometimes the moon would force the burden strap on him.

The issue of the Two-Spirit's life is not a cut-and-dried matter, which is appropriate enough in a paper considering tricksters. The Omaha story referred to above, entitled by Erdoes and Ortiz as "The Winkte Way," carries its own ambiguities. The editors' introductory note says, "Iktinike [the Omaha trickster] and Rabbit are always chasing women, but sometimes, just for a change, they turn themselves into *winktes*, doing it the *winkte* way" (133).[25] Meeting up with Rabbit, Iktinike suggests exactly that. Rabbit objects when the trickster wants Rabbit to be the passive partner and bend over, allowing Iktinike to get on top of him. After they argue about positioning for a time, it is Iktinike who gives in and bends over so that Rabbit is in the superior sexual position. After he finishes, Rabbit jumps off and runs away with Iktinike calling after him, "Hey, come back! It's my turn now!" to no avail. As Iktinike approaches home, one group of boys playing games after another tells him that Rabbit is spreading the word that he mounted the trickster. Soon, Iktinike feels that he must relieve himself. When he squats little baby rabbits rather than feces come out![26] Arriving home, he is greeted by his amorous wife who wants to have sex. Iktinike begs off: "I've got a headache" (Trickster 133-135).

How "traditional" this story is, is impossible to say, although the conclusion's use of a clichéd Euroamerican joke is perhaps a fairly recent turn. In any event, what or who is being ridiculed here? One possibility, of course, is that, under the influence of Christian missionaries, the story ridicules *winktes*. In this perspective, *winktes* would be identified with Trickster—master of the perverse violation of all standards and limits—in that they, like him, try to be what they are not, that is, (according to this view) women.[27] The story also seems to equate homosexuals and *winktes*, thus emphasizing sexual practice over other aspects of a *winkte's* cultural role. Yet, a quite different perspective is possible, also based on gender expectations. In *winkte*-male sex, the *winkte* either performed oral sex on the man or took the passive role in anal sex. Sometimes, however, perhaps "just for a change," like Iktinike and Rabbit, the partners might reverse sex roles. In such circumstances, the man would not want his part to become known, for taking the passive role would reflect badly on his masculinity (Williams 96-97). Does this story satirize swaggering machismo by making public the humiliation of the trickster's usual aggressive masculinity sexuality? (After all, it is he who initiates the sexual contact.) Even the boys, who presumably would have

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looked up to a masculine role model, know Iktinike's secret. And his mortification is so complete that for once sexually extravagant Trickster is curbed. From this point of view, then, the story may be a satire of the pretense and posturing involved in men's notions of masculine gender images. Finally, trickster stories often show a trickster posing as one with sacred power and, usually, suffering a penalty for this hubris.[28] Is the Omaha story, then, yet another example of a trickster fooling around in sacred territory where he has no business being?

As we have seen, Arapaho tradition says that *Nih'an'çan*, the Arapaho trickster, was the first *haxuxana*" (Kroeber, *Arapaho* 19). What more obvious original could we ask for in this matter: Trickster the shape changer and violator of boundaries. What's even more revealing is the fact that an Arapaho myth explains that this came about when *Nih'an'çan* "pretended to be a woman, married the Mountain-Lion, and deceived him by giving birth to a false child" (Kroeber, *Arapaho* 19). Such stories occurred throughout Native America. The Arapaho story and the Omaha story of *Iktinike*'s brief experience as a *winkte* encourages another look at the male versions of well-behaved girl stories. Could some of these stories be satires of Two-Spirits or might they use Two Spirits for satirical purposes?

In a Winnebago version of such episodes, Wakdjunkaga, in a scheme with his companions Fox, Jay, and Nit to survive the winter, "marries" a man. He makes a vulva from an elk liver, breasts from an elk's kidneys, and dons a woman's dress. As the final step in his transformation into a pretty woman, he lets Fox (followed by Jay and Nit) have intercourse with him and impregnate him.[29] His arrival announced by an old woman that lives at the edge of the village, Trickster enters the village and marries the chief's son, a good hunter, and provides him with three sons. Wakdjunkaga's secret is revealed when he playfully jumps over the fire and "drop[s] something very rotten" (one assumes the liver-vulva) and runs off from the village (Radin, *Trickster* 22-24). This story is full of the sorts of violations we expect in a Trickster story, although they aren't all of his doing: a "woman" goes visiting alone (unheard of among the Winnebago); an old woman of little social status appoints herself town crier to announce the arrival of a handsome woman; and the trickster-bride devours the bridal meal most unceremoniously (Radin, *Trickster* 57). A major point in the story seems to be the implied criticism of the chief, who "puts the satisfaction of having his son marry a beautiful woman ahead of the prudence and judgment required by his position (Wiget, *His Life* 90). Ironically, trickster, the one usually driven by passion and in-

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stinct, becomes the chastening agent of the chief whose self-interest has made him ignore "the demands of tradition and responsibility for the common good" (Wiget 90).

Wiget goes on to say that the story reminds us of the danger of confusing the person and the role. Of course, in this instance, the confusion is intentional. Still, Wakdjunkaga does fulfill part of his assumed role: curiously, he/she does give birth. Nevertheless, the humiliating joke rests on the same ground as in the female versions of this episode: the haughty one who defies the culture's gender expectations is duped by Trickster, in this case because the victim assumes that the one he takes as wife is who the person is. However, given the ambivalence sometimes accompanying the tradition of Two-Spirits, the gender-crossing Trickster's shenanigans could be a burlesque warning to both Two-Spirit and husband not to take their "marriage" too seriously; that, in fact, there is no real spousal relationship but only a relationship of convenience. Finally, ever mindful of the multivalence of Trickster stories, let us not forget how commonly they prove the imperfections of human categories. Trickster's occasional transgendering adventures comically demonstrate the inadequacy of what seem to be "natural" gender expectations but which are, in fact, artificial—that is to say, only human—boundaries. Trickster prepares us for the necessity of Two Spirits.

Early in this paper, I acknowledged the role that conjecture would play in my discussion. My treatment of female tricksters and of Two Spirits is the focal point of most of this conjecture. There is no need, however, for speculation when it comes to the satirical, didactic thrust of Trickster stories. That the stories serve(d) such ends has long been recognized. Only on occasion, however, have scholars and other writers examined the stories for their specific lessons, Jarold Ramsey and Andrew Wiget being two notable exceptions. In any society, satire is usually directed toward culturally specific issues rather than general human foibles (the much acclaimed "universality" of Western world literary "classics" notwithstanding). We should not be surprised, then, that Native American trickster stories target particular behaviors and kinds of people within their cultures. And just as female-male relations and gender expectations have been at the heart of much Euroamerican satire, so, too, in Native American oral traditions gender expectations come in for their share of hilarity. While Native American cultures traditionally have been more tolerant than Euroamericans of the ambiguities that sexual behavior and gender roles can comprise, most nevertheless were clear about what the roles were and about expectations surrounding them. It is clear that Trick-

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that Trickster stories were significant instruments for enforcing tribal sexual/gender mores. A part of this effort—for some storytellers, at least—involved gendering the plots and details of some trickster episodes.

NOTES

[1] Parts of this essay have been published previously in "Living Sideways: Social Themes and Social Relationships in Native American Trickster Stories," *American Indian Quarterly* (Winter 1989). I wish to thank University College Dean John Bryan and Department Head Janet Reed for granting me the released time that allowed me to complete this article. My thanks also to friend and colleague Roger Dunsmore for his suggestions, encouragement and challenges.

[2] "The final question may [be] whether it is appropriate at all to draw broad conclusions about the functions of these story's gendered figures in their cultures" (Senier 224).

[3] As Klamath were exposed to and adopted Euroamerican attitudes, such details have often been omitted or concealed (Stern, "Trickster" 168).

[4] Other trickster stories that are not so sexually oriented make socially focused observations on male tricksters' behavior. (See Ballinger, "Living Sideways.") It is probably in the ribald tales, however, that gender plays the most obvious role.

[5] There is one story in which the fact that trickster's penis has a will of its own is manifested in anomalous fashion. Erdoes and Ortiz retell a Gros Ventre story in which *Nixant's* penis proves to be a more responsible citizen than its owner by warning girls about the trickster's designs on them, telling others that he is a liar, etc. (160-161).

[6] Stories of sexual intercourse between humans and animals and their resulting offspring are much more than salaciousness. They reaffirm our relationship to the world of non-human persons. In this vein, some remind us the obligations we owe such relatives. For example, see the Blackfoot buffalo wife story reprinted in Feldman's *The Storytelling Stone: Myths and Tales of the American Indians*.

[7] Of course, little is straightforward and unambiguous when we are talking about tricksters. The conventional wisdom in trickster studies tells us that the bawdy stories are, on another level, a vicarious romp in

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the forbidden. More, while the stories may unveil lurking threats of social disintegration and chaos, Trickster's doings also reveal how by ripping through the barbed wire of human moral proscriptions and artificial moral categories Trickster exercises creative, even sacred, powers. Out there beyond our social frontier, Trickster makes all things possible and creates reality. This aspect of trickster stories has been amply discussed by Babcock, Ramsey, Toelken, Wiget, etc.

[8] A Kwakiutl story tells of Coyote's similarly defeating Death-Bringing Woman and her vaginal dentata (Erdoes and Ortiz 362-365). Other versions are in Erdoes and Ortiz, 283-285, 362-5; Jacobs "Sahaptin," 188-90. There are non-trickster versions of such episodes, as well.

Other stories in which Coyote has sex with dangerous females—a butterfly and mussel-shell killers—are included in Walker, *Nez Perce Coyote Tales* (25-27, 28-29).

[9] Occasionally, even in trickster stories, one comes upon a detail or other story element that raises questions about possible Christian influence.

[10] Wiget further observes, "Female trickster figures are known in Native American traditional literatures, and their occurrence does not seem to depend on the sex of the storyteller or audience or even particular contexts. Thus, at least in some societies, a female trickster was a commonly understood, unexceptional figure, whose character is contrasted with that of the male. Among the Arizona Tewa, for instance, Coyote Woman is all treachery and malevolence and lacks the pathetic qualities of the male figure that ameliorate our judgment of him" (89). Wiget overstates the case here. The Coyote Woman in the Tewa story is neither more nor less treacherous and malevolent than male Coyotes. And if male Coyotes possess "pathetic qualities that ameliorate our judgment of him," such an evaluation can be made only after examining a range of trickster stories. Given as large a body of female trickster stories, we might well make similar assertions about them.

[11] That indigenous storytellers allow gender to influence their performance is evidenced elsewhere in addition to trickster stories. See Morrow and Mather and McClellan, Johns, and Wedge (Swann, *Coming to Light* 41 and 129).

[12] The use of male or female tricksters according to the culture's lineal traditions is not invariable. To be accurate, I must note that even between two closely related matrilineal societies like the Arizona Tewa

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and the Hopi there may be gender differences in the tricksters of the same or similar episodes (Parsons 282; Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 91). In different versions of one story with either a male or female protagonist, a Coyote's desire to have children as pretty as Deer's makes him/her gullible enough to burn or suffocate his/her own children when he/she is tricked into putting them in a fire. In a Hopi version of this story, it is the spots of Antelope's children that Coyote wants to imitate (Malotki and Lomatuway'ma 27). A Navaho variant can be found in Parsons, *Navaho* 371. A Hopi version with a male Coyote combines Coyote's gullible admiration of Turkey's children with a variation on the Bungling Host episode (Voth 199-201).

And even within the same tradition, the same episode told by different persons might have not only differences in narrative details but differences in the trickster's sex. Thus, a Zuni story in which Coyote repeatedly forgets a song just learned has a male protagonist in the version Tedlock published in *Finding the Center* (78-83) and a female in *The Zuni: Self-Portrayals* (98-101).

[13] In a secondary creative role, she also originates moccasins, leggings, tanned robes, and methods of preparing pemmican. In one story, she debates another woman about how things should be arranged on earth and in Crow society, insisting that life shouldn't be made too easy for the People (Lowie, *Crow* 132).

[14] In fact, a Lipan Apache version of this story has a male Coyote as its protagonist (Opler). This Coyote is more obviously a trickster. The story, then, is consistent with what we expect of a trickster.

[15] "[T]his legitimate predator-trickster of the hunter era is out of tune with the lifestyle of sedentary planters, such as the Hopi Indians" (Malotki and Lomatuway'ma vi). We should also note that men were traditionally the hunters among Hopi.

[16] For two more Hopi versions of the Borrowed Feather episode, see Voth 196-7 and 201-2. In the first of these, Mother Coyote and Father Coyote are hunting for their children. She sees Blue Jays dancing in the trees and asks to borrow feathers so that she can join their dance. In the second, a male Coyote is apparently out hunting on his own. It is certainly not far-fetched to suggest that the storyteller knew of some of these other versions and intentionally chose the corn grinding activity.

[17] Except, of course, for the Bungling Host stories and Coyote marries his daughter stories.

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[18] Seumptewa and Vogelin translate one such Hopi story ("Wren and Coyote") in which Mother Coyote—carrying water in her mouth for her children at home—laughs every time she passes Wren who is singing, dancing, and laughing, spilling the water (Kendall 104).

[19] Actually, this term refers to all "alternatively gendered people of either sex" (Lang 100). My discussion focus on the person traditionally called a *berdache*. This person is male-bodied but chooses to live as a woman does, and may, therefore, dress and behave like a woman (including performing in a woman's occupations and having sex with a man). At times in the past, such a person might be a man's second or third wife in a society that permitted multiple wives. The most comprehensive treatment of this social role is Walter L. Williams' *The Spirit and The Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*.

Because the term *berdache* carries inappropriate connotations (such as *slave*), I shall use either the term Two-Spirit or a tribal name for this gender. The Lakota term is *winkte*; the Arapaho term is *haxu'xan*; Crow, *baté*; Navajo, *nádleehé*; Shoshoni, *tainna wa'ippi*. Callender and Kochems provide a table identifying Native American cultures that acknowledged Two-Spirits (445). Internet surfers will find additional indigenous terms for Two-Spirits long with a map locating Two-Spirit traditions at www.geocities.com/westhollywood/Stonewall/3044/berdache.html.

[20] For a discussion of the theme of ambiguity and tricksters, see Ballinger, "Ambigere: The Euro- American Picaro and The Native American Trickster." *MELUS* 17.1 (Spring 1991-1992):21-39.

[21] Callender and Kochems assert that a Two-Spirit's sexual practices were a consequence of choosing this gender role, not a cause of it (454-5). Resistance to an alternative sexuality may explain some of the ambivalence about assuming a Two Spirit's role discussed below.

[22] Thayer suggests that, because the Two-Spirit's "power was from outside the ordinary realm, and was located within the sacred realm of the vision quest-guardian-spirit complex," gender behavior that might otherwise have been considered outside of the norm was accepted (292).

[23] Among the Lakota, *winktes* were feared as well as respected because of the supernatural origin of their skills (Gill and Sullivan, "Gender Crossing" 98, "*Winkte*" 342). Do we see evidence of Arapaho ambivalence in the name *haxu'xan*, which Kroeber says means "rotten bone" (Arapaho 19). It is also interesting to recall, as stated earlier, that Old

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Woman Coyote—in a contrary mood—was responsible for the creation of the Crow *bates*.

Apparently, husbands of Two-Spirits faced some difficulties as well. Callender and Kochems report that among Plains tribes a husband might be ridiculed for taking a wife who could both hunt and keep house, the implication being that the husband was too lazy or unable to hunt (448).

Not all cultures were accepting and tolerant of Two-Spirited people, for example, the Haudenosaunee, the Apache, the Comanche, and the Tohono O'odam (Williams 39). Similarly, not all people in nations that once accepted Two-Spirits still accept this tradition. Beverly Little Thunder claims that Two-Spirits are no longer honored in Lakota communities (Little Thunder 204-209).

[24] We ought to remember the protective, restorative role widows and orphans often play in Native American stories. For example, see the story of Bloodclot Boy in Elsie Clew Parsons' "Kiowa Tales" (62). Like the orphans of oral tradition, *winktes* might have been marginal in a social sense but still loaded with potential for power. In fact, many might argue that they received their power from their marginality, as Babcock and Pelton have explained the concept.

[25] Doing something in a different way, "just for a change," is certainly consistent with tricksters' characters: they are never satisfied with what they have or who they are.

[26] Is this detail a parody related to the stories in which trickster's feces are his advisors and sometimes referred to by a relational name?

[27] This is an appropriate place to point out that some Native Americans came to identify Trickster with Satan (Radin 201-2; Stern, "The Trickster" 168-9).

[28] Tricksters in the Bungling Host type of story are a readily accessible example of this common theme in trickster stories.

[29] Other versions can be found in Ramsey, *Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country* (23-4) and in Deward Walker's *Nez Perce Coyote Stories* (97).

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